

Maiden Wind Farm DEIS Comments from public meeting in Prosser on April 23, 2002

- I saw the project on the news last night and want to learn more.
- I think this project is a good thing because it is a clean form of energy.
- I am interested in having a wind farm on my property.
- We've been in favor of wind power and have been trying to get wind power in the area since 1984.
- I am in favor of wind power on my land.
- Renewable resources -- DEIS says people want it, but doesn't it cost about 20% more?
- I prefer wind to polluting technologies, but prefer hydro to wind. Good hydro, that is.
- I can't understand the people who are against it; they don't want nuclear, they don't want dams ...
- Get started!
- I am concerned about one company coming in and potentially blocking other companies from doing wind projects.
- Don't want properties not leased by the developer to be studied in the EIS.
- What kind of foundations will be used?
- Will you study building new access roads?
- Interested in working on project.
- Concerned about 5,000 foot setback from GMA.
- Define special status species.
- Mitigation banking for BPA and other projects is preferred. This piecemeal approach to mitigation will hurt us. It is a large tract of land to split up.
- In Benton County, sage brush/shrub-steppe takes 40-50 years to grow. In Grant County, it would take 10-15 years because they have more precipitation. Temporary impacts to sage brush/shrub-steppe really aren't temporary in this area.
- Are there any standard bird surveys?
- Will you look at visual impacts on neighbors, as well as on property owners who want the wind farm?
- What do the locals think of the aesthetics?
- I drive from here to Walla Walla and it makes me want to cry -- I don't like all those turbines. I wish we had some viewing corridors of shrub steppe.
- If I'm going to have to look at them, I might as well sign up and have them on my land.
- Distance from highway makes this location preferable to Stateline.
- People are worried about the view but they'll get used to it.
- At what level is tribal participation?
- Benton County is the fastest growing area in Washington. There are a lot of examples around here of responsible development.
- We need wind power to survive in these times of farming.
- This wind project will be good for our local economy!
- WDFW did not see their scoping letter in the agency correspondence appendix.

April 10, 2002

BPA Communications
P.O. Box 12999
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To Whom It May Concern:

This letter provides comments to the Maiden Wind Farm draft NEPA/SEPA Environmental Impact Statement DOE/EIS-0333. The Washington Natural Heritage Program inventories and maintains a database of rare plants and high quality ecosystem types in Washington.

The current status of the bunchgrass steppe and shrub steppe ecosystem in Washington is declining in area and in condition. Over 50% of this habitat's original range has been converted to agriculture, urban or industrial areas. Of the remaining original shrub steppe habitat, less than 10% appears in good or better condition. These statistics demonstrate the degree of concern directed at any conversion of natural/seminatural shrub steppe or steppe to other uses.

Much of the northern edge of the proposed wind farm is adjacent to the Rattlesnake Research Natural Area on the Hanford National Monument. That natural area contains some of the best examples of native bunchgrass steppe and shrub steppe communities in the state, as well as, in the inland Pacific Northwest. The proposed wind farm is partially located in a natural/seminatural habitat corridor between the Monument and the Yakima Firing Range, another stronghold of natural, native bunchgrass ecosystems.

The western half of the proposed The Maiden Wind Farm is located in natural/seminatural vegetation. Although we do not have recent inventory information of that specific area, inspection of photographs in Figures 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, and 12 and habitat descriptions of rare plant habitat in the Eagle Cap Consulting, Inc. "An investigation of the rare plant resources associated with the Maiden Wind Farm -- Benton and Yakima counties, Washington" technical report (2002) indicate a continuation of high quality natural vegetation from Hanford south on to adjacent land and occurrence of native bunchgrass steppe communities on the project area.

The increasing rarity of this habitat for a large number of plant and animal species and the location of the proposed wind farm in a corridor between two large landscapes of native natural habitat raises concern over the direct conversion native habitat along the path turbine installation.

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I recommend 1) the proposed turbine locations within natural habitat be completely avoided or minimized by placing turbines and associated transmission and maintenance roads to those areas currently converted to agriculture or non-native plant species, 2) the project be coordinated with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in minimizing the effects of turbines on shrub steppe and steppe wildlife species, and 3) wherever native vegetation is disturbed and where it is converted to turbine pads or roads, an equivalent area be restored with native species from adjacent seed sources.

I support the development of alternative energy sources with minimal impact of the natural heritage values. Thank you the opportunity to comment on this project.

Sincerely,

Rex C. Crawford, Ph.D.
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January 31, 2002
To: Kent McHenry
CC: File
From: Dan Tamsky

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Review comments, Maiden Wind Farm (MWF).

Who in Yakima County Public Works has discussed MWF impacts with the proponent's project team?

Lewandowski Road is the only Yakima County road discussed in the EIS. I do not know of any other Yakima County – maintained roads that could be used to reach the MWF site. The first 370 feet of Lewandowski Road east of SR 241 have a bituminous surface treatment. The remaining 1.48 miles of county road are gravel or dirt. Lewandowski is not dust abated (per Matt Petrusiewicz 2/5).

A 24 – hour traffic count was taken just east of the state highway intersection between about 1:30 PM 8/17/2000 and 1:00 PM 8/18/2000 (Thursday and Friday).

The accident records in the County Road Information System (CRIS) database cover 1985 – 1997. Only one accident was reported in that period.

Paragraph	EIS	Comment
3.9.3.1	"This gravel 35-mph roadway turns into a private road at Sulphur Springs Ranch."	There is no posted speed limit on Lewandowski Road. The general county speed limit of 50 MPH applies. Safe travel speed would vary by location, weather, and road conditions.
	"The afternoon rush hour (4 p.m. to 5 p.m.) is assumed to be the period in which the maximum amount of traffic is experienced."	The results of the traffic count on August 17 –18, 2000, suggest that the peak period would be much earlier (2:30 – 3:30 PM).
3.9.4.1		The evaluation criteria look OK.
	"Construction...finish before dusk, limiting the number of vehicles during peak hour traffic periods..."	It is likely that construction worker travel will peak at the same time as general and school bus travel on Lewandowski Road.
3.9.4.2	"...because background traffic on these roads is very low, it is likely that the LOS would be C or better when project traffic is added to existing conditions"	LOS is not appropriate for discussing impacts on an unpaved road. Dust would become intolerable long before the vehicle – carrying capacity of the road was reached.
Table 3.9-3	Peak Hour Vehicle Trips = 269	Would all trips use every road? How long would each road be used for site access? Clearly the peak number of